



GALE Combined Surveys Housing Needs Survey Report Summary December 2023

Contents

Executive Summary	2
1) Introduction	2
Resident surveys	2
Non-Residents Surveys	3
Business Surveys	3
2) Permanent Resident’s Survey Summary	3
3) Energy Efficiency in Resident’s Homes	4
4) Summary of All Respondents Wishing to Move Home.....	5
Low-Cost Home Ownership Overview – 22 Respondent’s First Tenure Choice	6
Self-Build Overview – 9 Respondent’s First Tenure Choice	6
Low-Cost Rent Overview – 12 Respondent’s First Tenure Choice	7
Open Market Purchase – 9 Respondent’s First Tenure Choice	7
Private Rent Overview – 2 Respondent’s First Tenure Choice.....	8
4.1) Workspace Provision in New Homes	8
4.2) Respondents that have already tried to find alternative housing	8
4.3) Future Potential Households from existing residents	9
Table: Preferred Housing Choice Future Households	9
4.4) Community Attitudes & Priorities.....	9
Table: Resident’s Views on Housing Needs & Priorities	10
5) Non-Resident Survey Housing Need & Demand Summary	10
5.1) Non-Residents Survey Respondent Profile	10
5.2) Non-Resident Survey Housing Need & Demand Summary.....	11
Table: Tenure Choice & Bedrooms	12
6) Business Survey.....	12
6.1) Profile of Respondents with an Existing Business.....	12
6.2) Businesses that have experienced issues due to lack of affordable housing	13
7) Final Conclusions.....	14
8) Final Recommendations	14

Executive Summary

Gairloch (/ˈɡɛərloʊx/ GAIR-lokh; Scottish Gaelic: Geàrrloch [meaning "Short Loch"]) is a village, civil parish and community on the shores of Loch Gairloch in Wester Ross, in the North-West Highlands of Scotland. A tourist destination in the summer months, Gairloch has a golf course, a museum, several hotels, a variety of shops, takeaway restaurants, a community centre, a leisure centre with sports facilities, a local radio station (Two Lochs Radio), beaches and nearby mountains. Gairloch is one of the principal villages on the North Coast 500 route.

Following conversations in the community around the limited availability of affordable housing and its impact on the community and local businesses, Communities Housing Trust (CHT) were commissioned by Gairloch and Loch Ewe Action Forum (GALE) to carry out a Housing Needs Survey (HNS) of Gairloch and the surrounding areas. This assessment would provide information on housing need and demand and feed into the proposed and upcoming local developments.

The Housing Needs Survey consisted of 3 independent surveys running in parallel: one survey for residents, non-residents and one for local businesses in Gairloch, Aultbea and Poolewe. Reference will be made to these areas in some parts of each of the reports.

Summary

Gairloch and the surrounding areas are common with many rural areas in Scotland having a significant shortage of affordable housing which is negatively affecting the community and local businesses. Residents have left the area to find housing and young socially active people are unable to move into the area.

The provision of affordable housing as part of a mixed development including community facilities, business units and seasonal worker accommodation could address some of these problems. The evidence from the surveys supports that a housing strategy should be created to explore building new homes and looking for opportunities to renovate existing buildings for re-use.

Given the present Scottish Government policies in relation to housing, environment and business opportunities exist for communities to develop tailored projects which meet their specific needs.

1) Introduction

Resident's surveys

245 households responded to the 3 surveys: 171 Gairloch survey, 45 Aultbea survey and 29 Poolewe.

Overall, 61% of all respondents are classed as being in fuel poverty and 74% would benefit from energy efficiency measures.

A total of 55 of respondent households (22%) are considering moving home, with the top tenure choices being affordable options of either low-cost homeownership (22) or low-cost rent (12). Overall, most households looking to move wish to move within the next year and would be looking for a 2 or 3 bed home in Gairloch (34), Poolewe (11) or Aultbea (5). 5 respondents chose other areas out with the 3 specified.

Additionally, the survey showed that there are 57 potential home leavers who wish to set up new households in the area within the next 5 years. Again, low-cost options of low-cost homeownership (17) and low-cost rent (27) were to the top two options selected. There was demand mainly for 2 bed homes (28) but also for 1 bed (16) and 3 bed (11).

55 of respondent households (22%) are considering moving home, with the top tenure choices being affordable options of either low-cost homeownership (22) or low-cost rent (12). Overall, most households looking to move wish to move within the next year and would be looking for a 2 or 3 bed home in Gairloch (34) or Poolewe (11).

Non-Resident's Surveys

24 non-residents responded to the housing survey who are considering permanently relocating to the area.

19 out of the 24 selected Gairloch as their preferred location. There was demand for the two affordable options of low-cost rent (7) and low-cost homeownership (6) but also buying on the open market (6).

17 wishing to relocate have already tried to find housing in the area.

Business Surveys

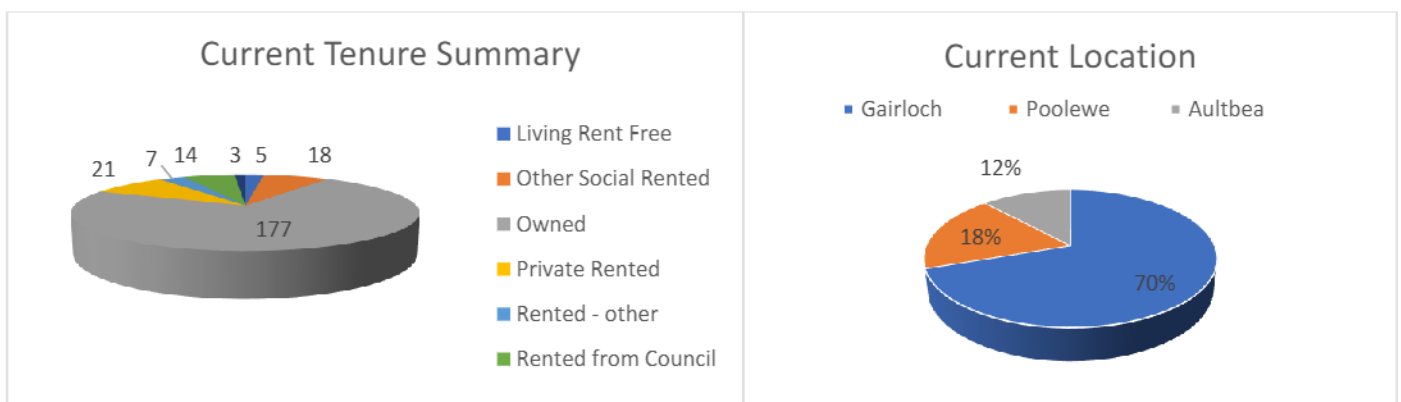
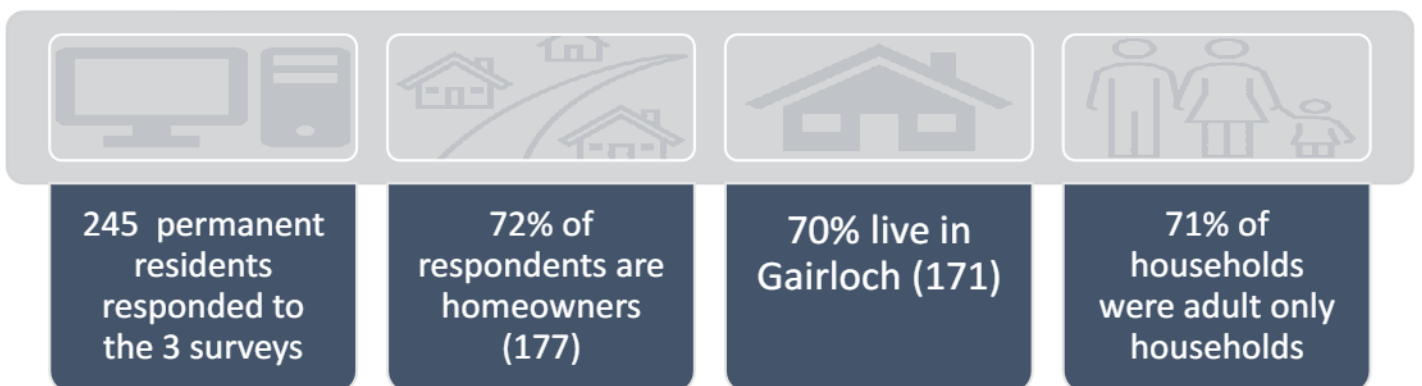
20 established businesses replied to the survey: 4 based in Aultbea and 16 in Gairloch.

The businesses operate in various sectors and all 20 believe that there is inadequate housing provision locally and within commuting distance of their business.

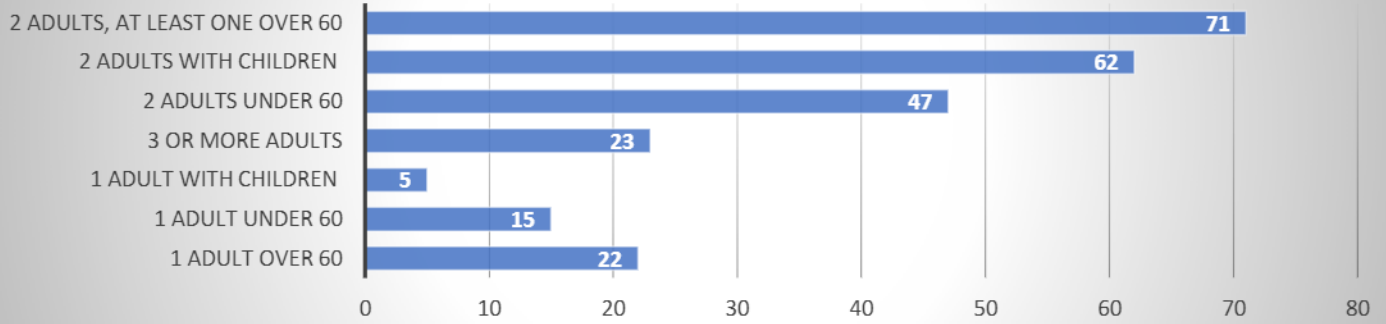
Nearly 50% of respondents have lost staff due to them not being able to find housing locally and that the shortage of housing in the area have affected the operation of their businesses.

10 businesses currently have employees requiring housing in the local area at present and 9 out of 10 businesses believe that some or all their employees with a housing need may leave their jobs if they cannot find suitable housing in the area.

2) Permanent Resident's Survey Summary



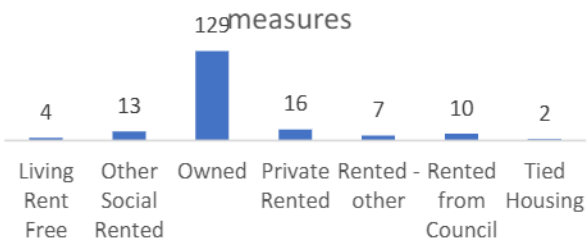
Household Composition Summary



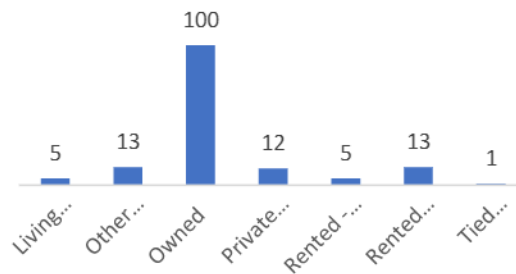
3) Energy Efficiency in Resident's Homes



Tenure summary that would benefit from energy efficiency measures



Tenure summary of those spending more than 10% on bills



61% are classed as being in fuel poverty



72% of those classed as being in fuel poverty live in Gairloch, 14% in Poolewe and 14% Aultbea



73% of those that would benefit from energy efficiency measures live in Gairloch, 14% in Aultbea and 13% in Poolewe

A household is in fuel poverty if the household's fuel costs (necessary to meet the requisite temperature and number of hours as well as other reasonable fuel needs) are more than 10% of the household's adjusted net income and after deducting these fuel costs, benefits received for a care need or disability, childcare costs, the household's remaining income is not enough to maintain an acceptable standard of living. (Source: Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019).

4) Summary of All Respondents Wishing to Move Home



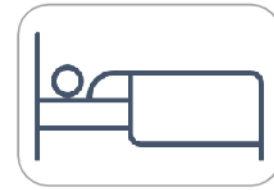
55 respondents expressed an interest in moving home and staying in one of the 3 areas



Nearly 70% of respondents (38) wish to move within the next year

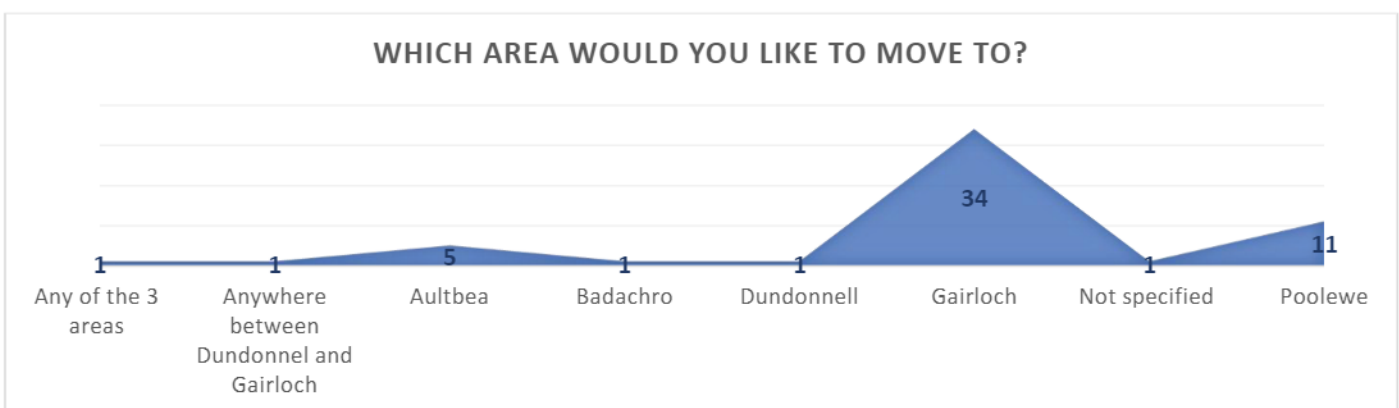
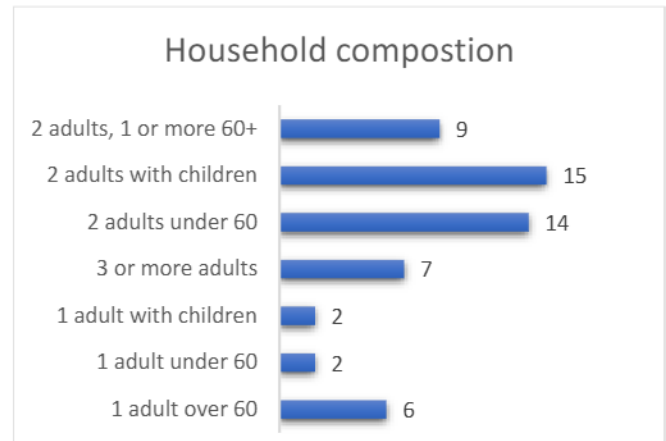
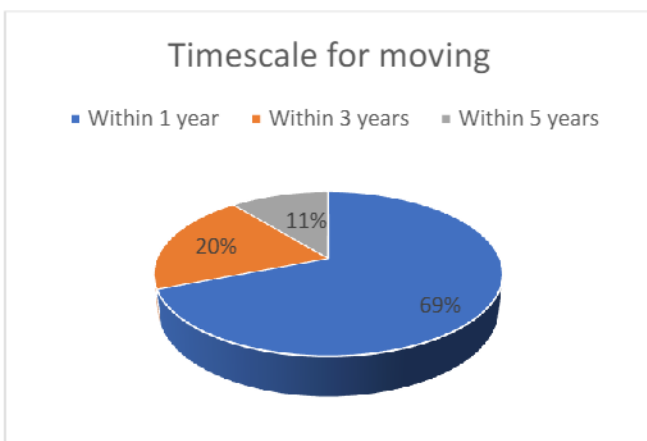


Low-Cost Home Ownership was the preferred tenure selected by 40%



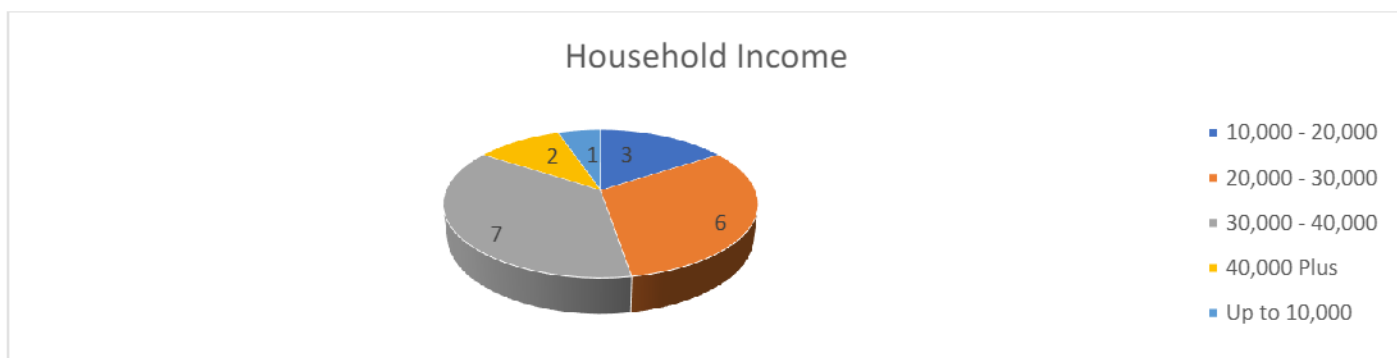
Most would be looking for a 2 or 3 bed home

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	Grand Total
Buy on Open Market	0	1	6	2	9
Low-Cost Rent	1	7	2	2	12
Low-Cost Home Ownership	2	8	9	3	22
Private Rent	1	2	0	0	3
Self- Build	0	2	6	1	9
Grand Total	4	20	23	8	55



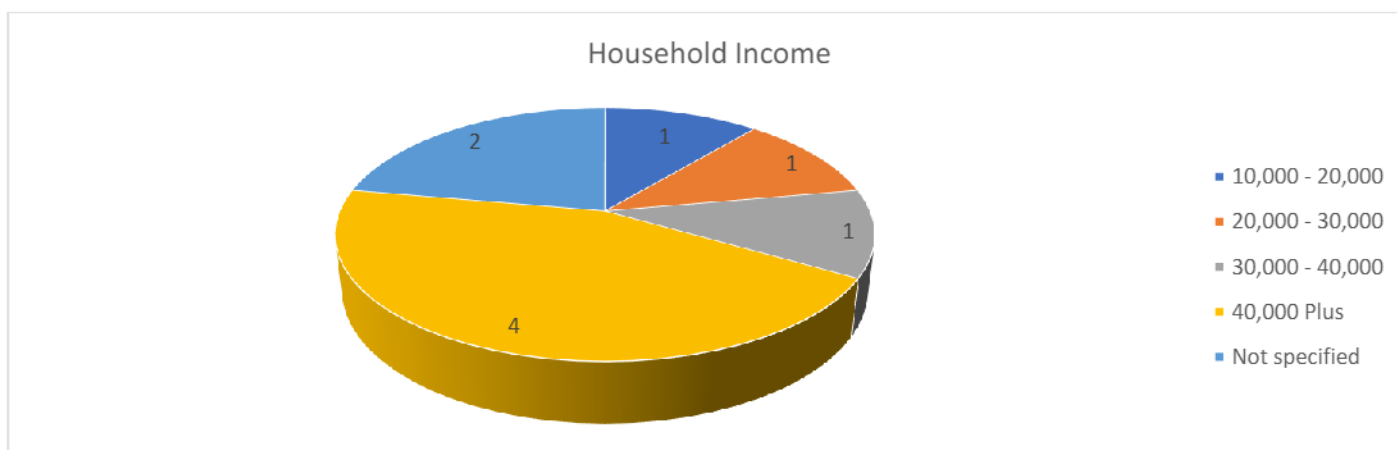
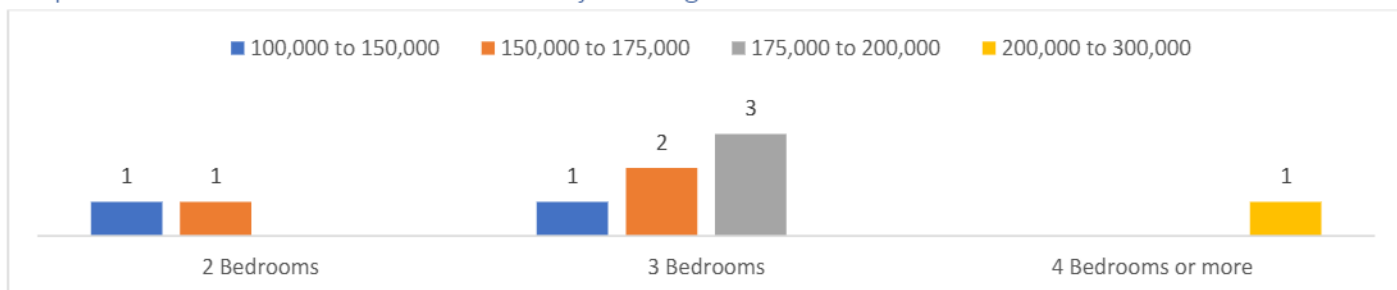
Low-Cost Home Ownership Overview – 22 Respondent’s First Tenure Choice

Graph: Low-Cost Home Ownership – No. of Bedrooms and Purchase Budget



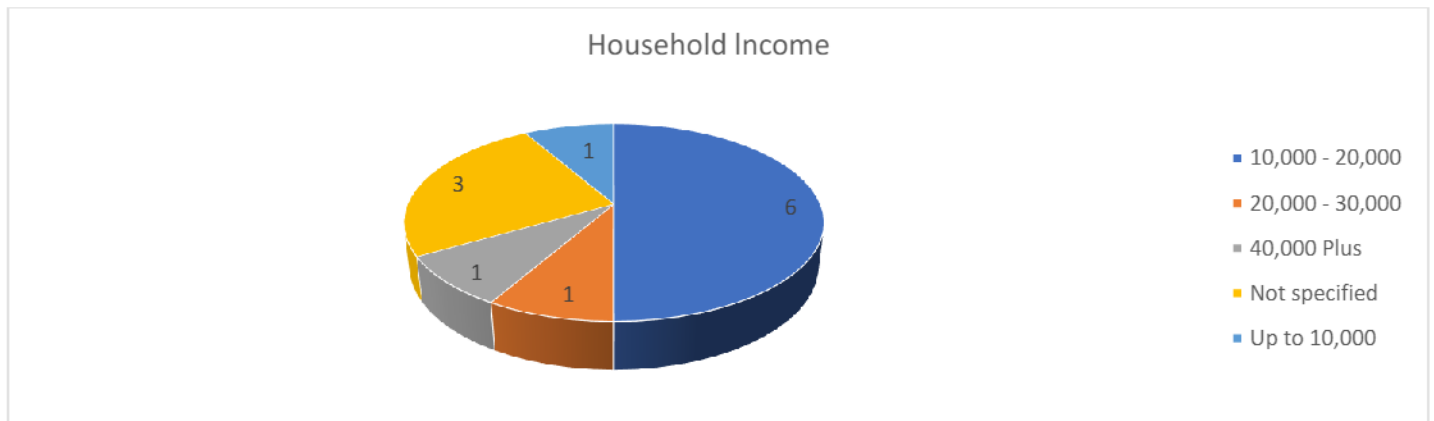
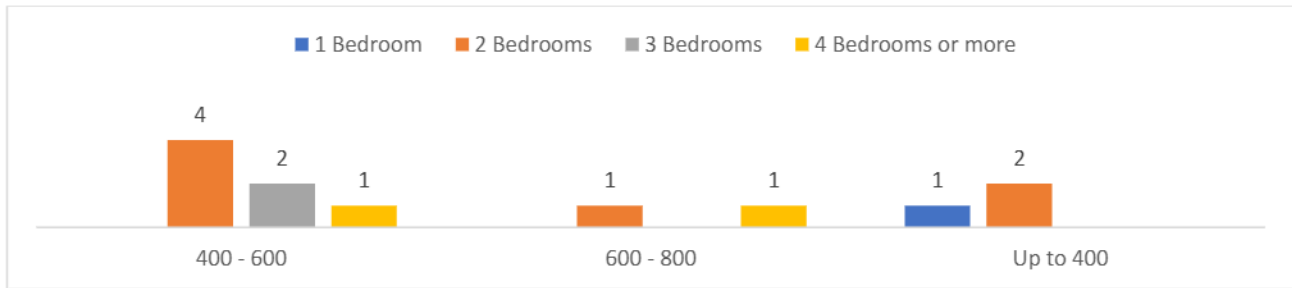
Self-Build Overview – 9 Respondent’s First Tenure Choice

Graph: Self-Build – No. of Bedrooms and Project Budget



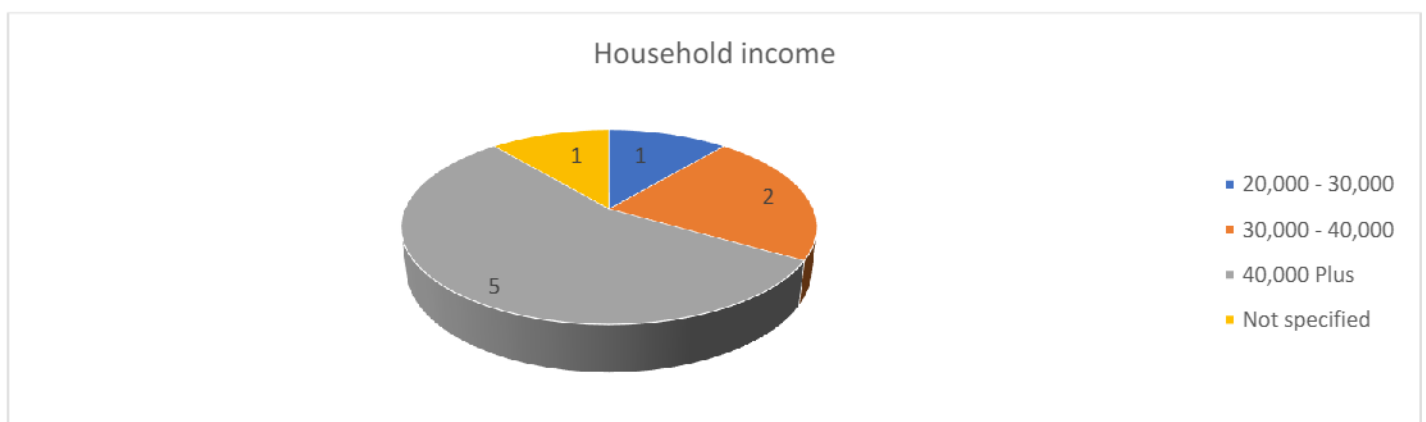
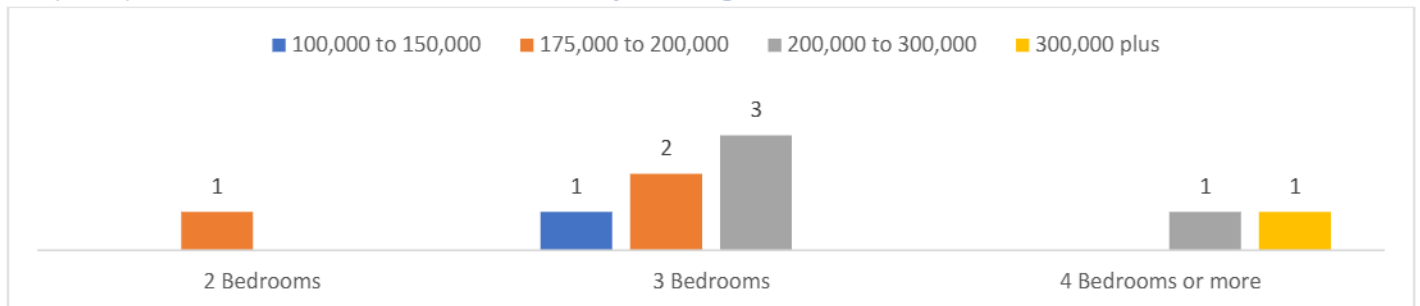
Low-Cost Rent Overview – 12 Respondent’s First Tenure Choice

Graph: Low-Cost Rent - No of Bedrooms and Project Budget



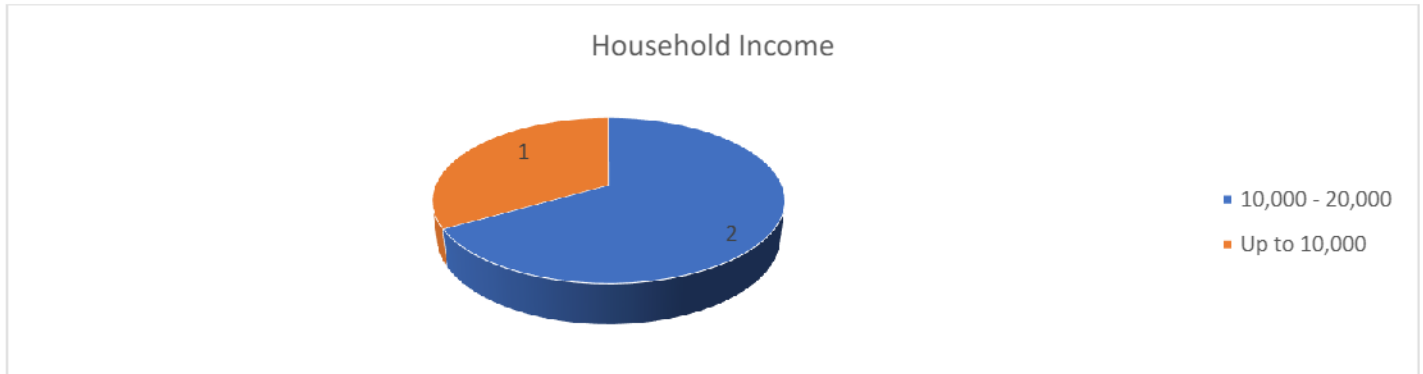
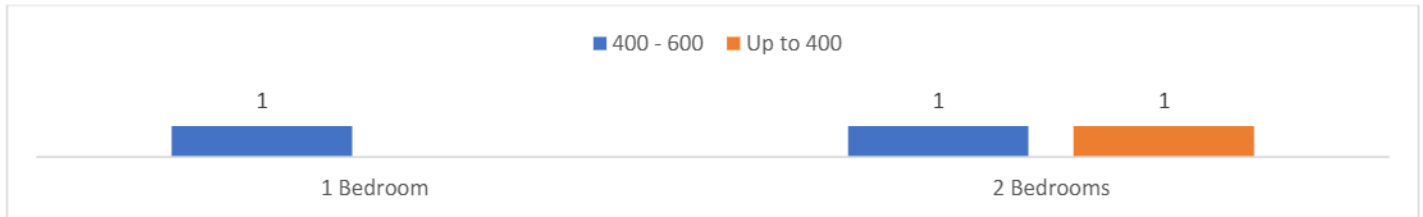
Open Market Purchase – 9 Respondent’s First Tenure Choice

Graph: Open Market - No of Bedrooms and Project Budget



Private Rent Overview – 2 Respondent’s First Tenure Choice

Graph: Private Rent - No of Bedrooms and Project Budget

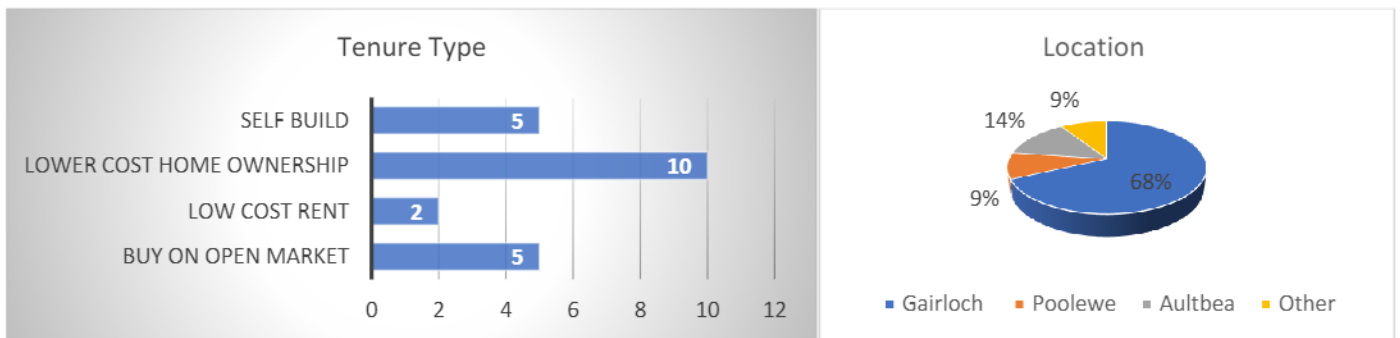


4.1) Workspace Provision in New Homes

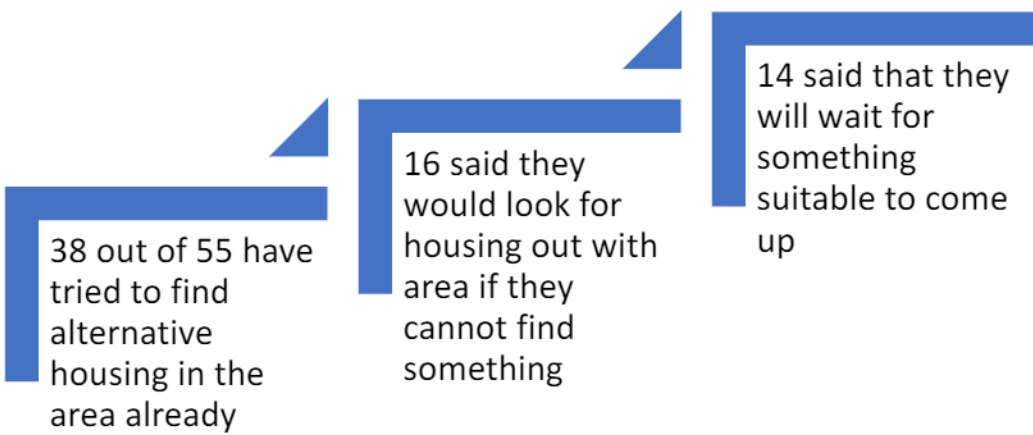
22 would like a form of workspace in their new home

Most people looking for workspace in their new home selected a tenure of low cost home ownership

Office space was most requested type of space (15) but there was also demand for shed / workshop space



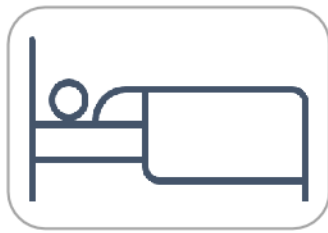
4.2) Respondents that have already tried to find alternative housing



4.3) Future Potential Households from existing residents



The survey identified 57 new potential households



Most of these future households would be looking for a 2 bed home



Low cost rent was the top choice selected for 27 new households (47%)



Only 6 individuals looking for independent housing are on the HHR

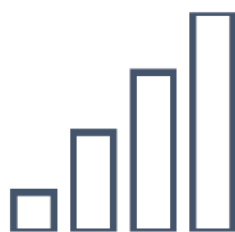
Table: Preferred Housing Choice Future Households

Row Labels	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 or more Beds	Not specified	Grand Total
Buy on the Open Market	0	0	2	0	2
Low-Cost Rent	12	13	1	1	27
Lower Cost Home Ownership	3	8	5	1	17
Private Rent	1	0	0	0	1
Renovation	0	1	0	0	1
Self-Build	0	2	3	0	5
Small Starter Flat/ Unit	0	4	0	0	4
Grand Total	16	28	11	2	57

4.4) Community Attitudes & Priorities



The majority of respondents support the need for more affordable housing with priority given to local people



Most agreed that there are too many second homes in the community



The majority of respondents agreed that any new homes built should be built with high energy efficiency standards



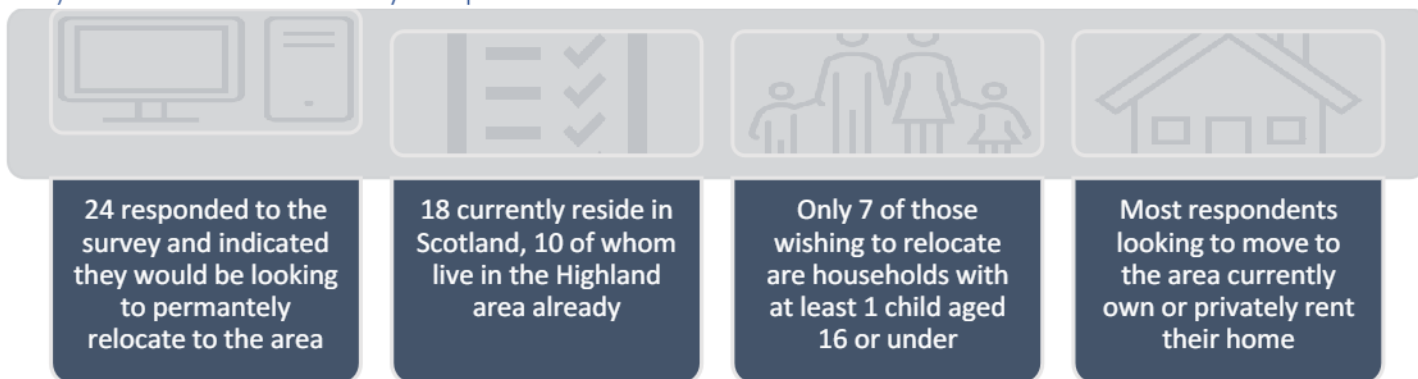
Most agreed that the community needs more smaller accessible homes to meet changing needs

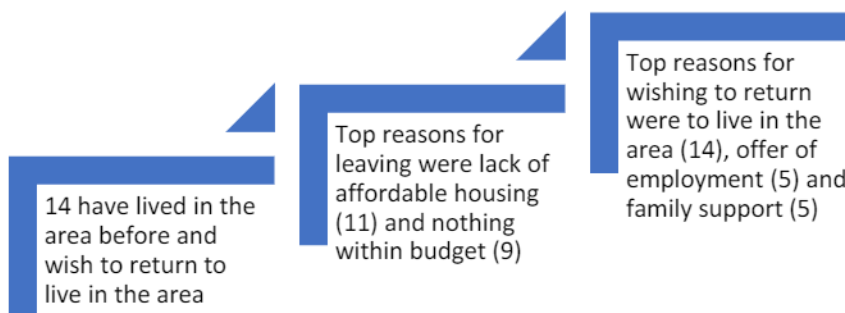
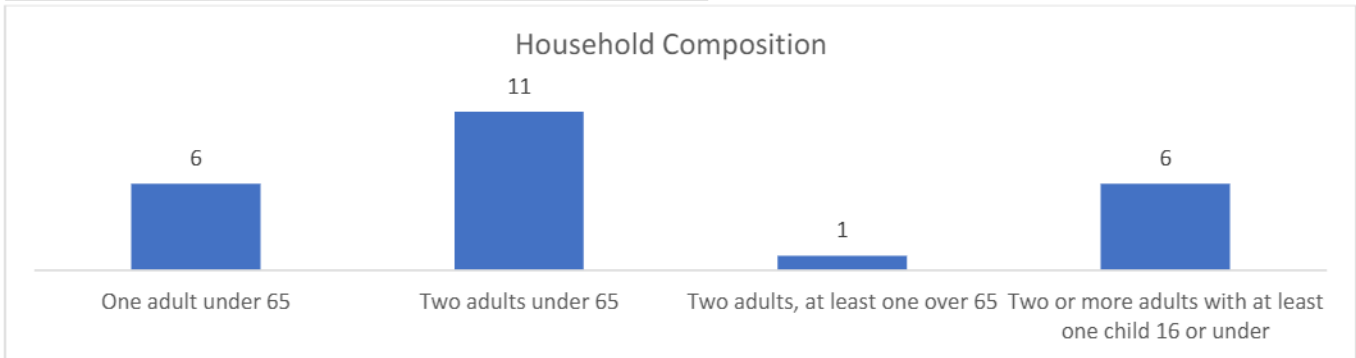
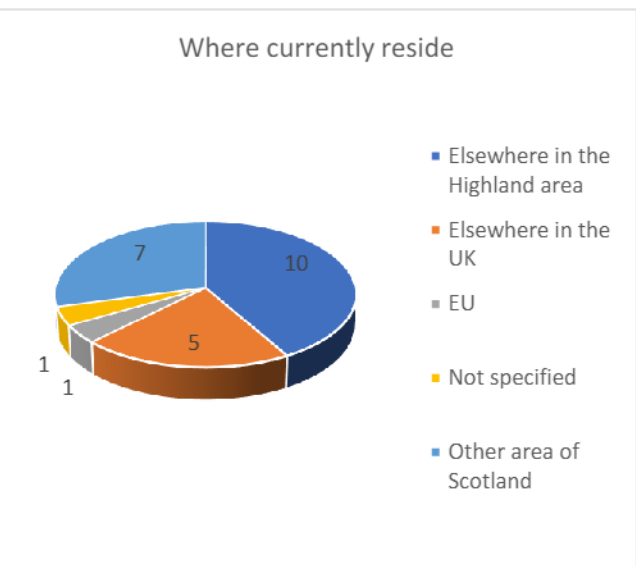
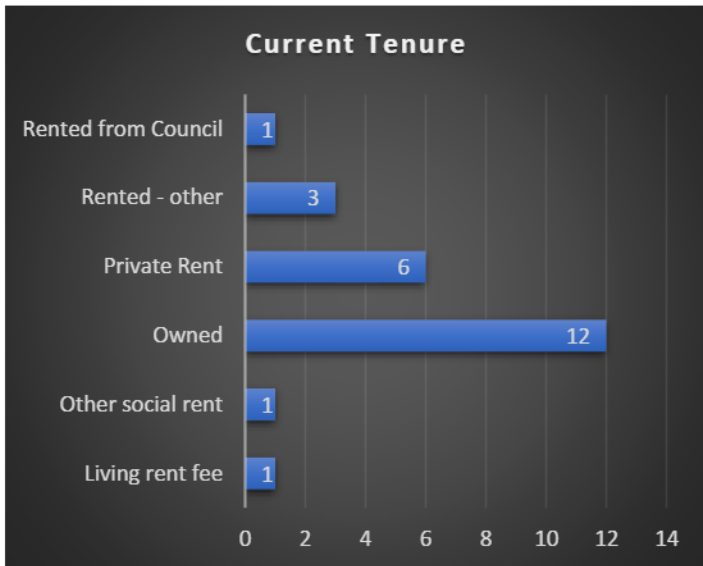
Table: Resident’s Views on Housing Needs & Priorities

	Strongly Agree	Generally Agree	Don’t know/ not sure	Generally Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Our community needs more affordable housing for rent	198	33	8	7	4
Local people have had to leave the area because they could not find suitable housing	145	54	40	5	1
Most people who live in our area want to stay permanently	70	57	65	5	1
People who live and work in the immediate surrounding area should get priority for new affordable homes	173	58	11	2	0
People who have a family connection should get priority for new affordable homes	76	35	57	15	4
People from outside our community area should get priority for any new affordable housing	4	13	76	96	53
The people of our community welcome newcomers from other communities to live here permanently	58	129	40	14	2
Our community needs more smaller accessible homes to meet changing needs	100	87	46	8	3
There are too many second homes in our community	149	53	27	12	4
It is important that new housing is built with high energy efficiency standards	199	30	3	0	2

5) Non-Resident Survey Housing Need & Demand Summary

5.1) Non-Residents Survey Respondent Profile





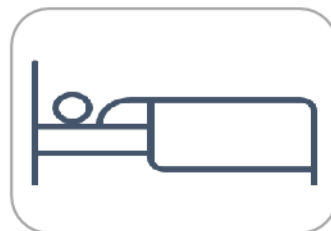
5.2) Non-Resident Survey Housing Need & Demand Summary



24 expressed an interest in permanently moving to the area, with 19 selecting Gairloch as their preferred location



There was most interest in purchasing on the open market or low cost option to both rent and buy



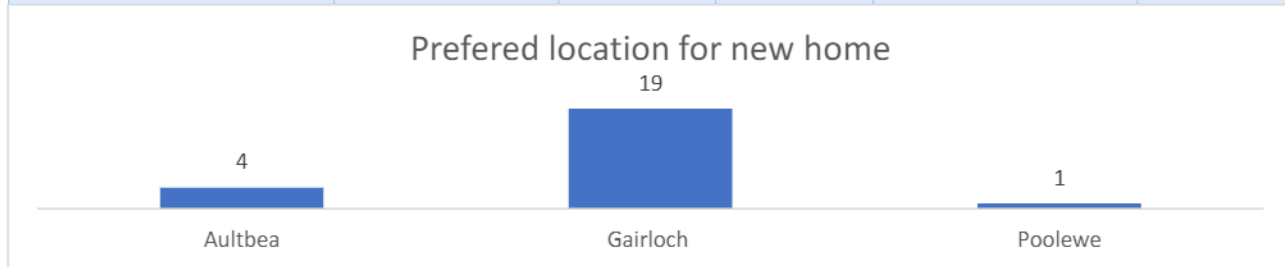
Survey showed demand mainly for 2 & 3 bed homes



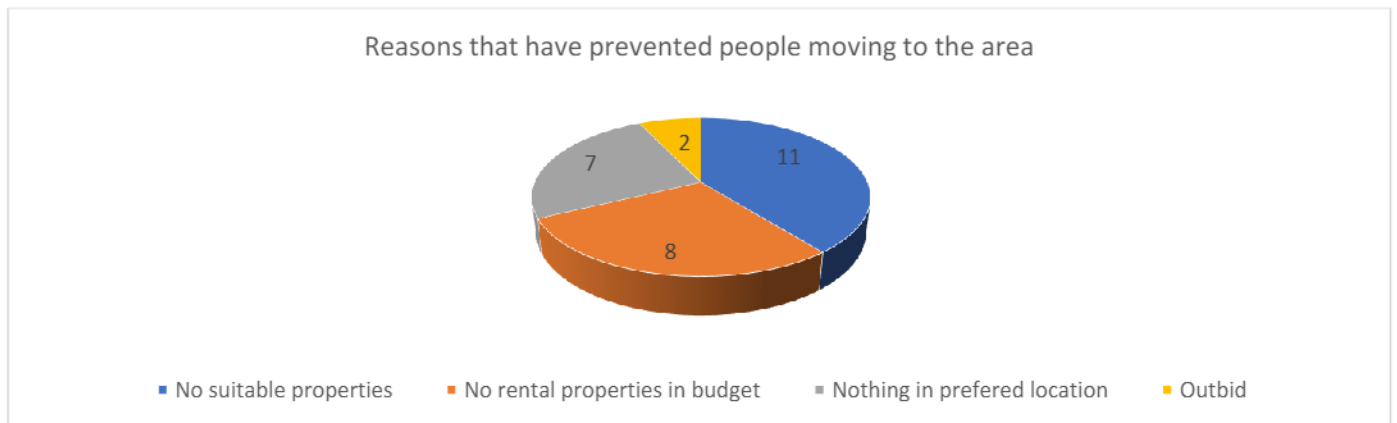
17 of non-residents have already tried to find a new home in the area already

Table: Tenure Choice & Bedrooms

Row Labels	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed or more	Grand Total
Buy on the open market	0	0	6	0	6
Low-cost home ownership	0	4	2	0	6
Low-cost rent	2	4	1	0	7
Private rent	0	3	0	0	3
Renovation	0	0	1	0	1
Self-Build	0	0	0	1	1
Grand Total	2	11	10	1	24



➤ 17 wishing to relocate have already tried to find housing in the area. The main reason selected for not being able to relocate already was that there were no suitable properties available. Other reasons selected are shown in the chart below:



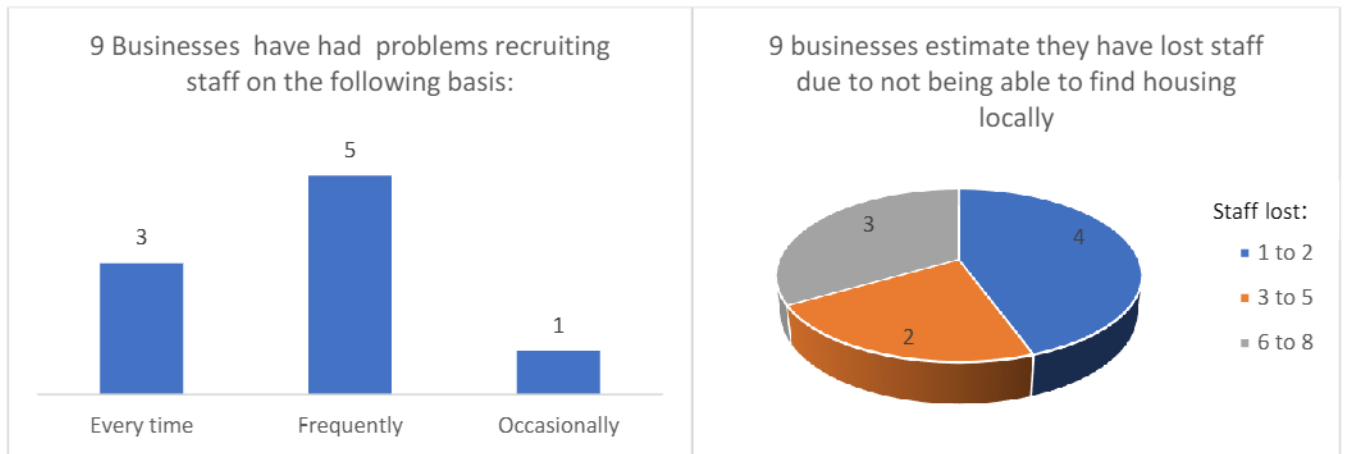
6) Business Survey

6.1) Profile of Respondents with an Existing Business

	Employer	Self-Employed - with employees	Self-Employed - no employees	Grand Total
Aultbea	0	0	4	4
Art	0	0	1	1
Construction	0	0	1	1
Retail	0	0	1	1
Transport	0	0	1	1

Gairloch	8	4	4	16
Fishing & Aquaculture	2	0	0	2
Hospitality	2	0	2	4
Hospitality, retail and tourism	1	0	0	1
Media	1	0	0	1
Retail	0	1	0	1
Tourism	2	3	2	7
Grand Total	8	4	8	20

6.2) Businesses that have experienced issues due to lack of affordable housing

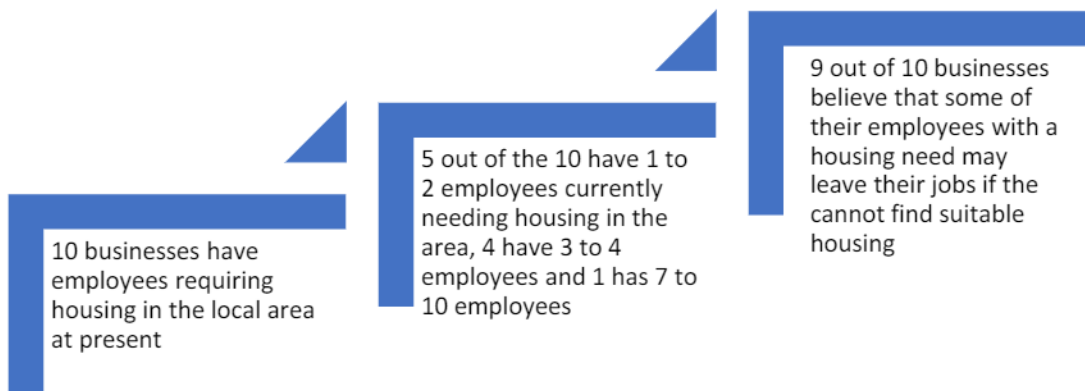


20 believe that there is inadequate housing provision locally and within commuting distance of their business

- 9 stated that the shortage of housing in the area has affected the operation of their business: for 8 this is a persistent or frequent problem

9 believe that staff turnover is affected by a lack of affordable available housing

- 12 believe that if more affordable housing is not provided, it will impact on the operation of their business



7) Final Conclusions

The survey results offer a snapshot of the housing need at a particular point in time. They have shown that there is a clear need for affordable housing driven from the existing residents of Gairloch and the surrounding areas, potential home leavers, returners, new-comers, non-residents and the business sector. We are confident that the findings evidence the need for more affordable housing provision

8) Final Recommendations

The final recommendations can be found in each report. The following is a snapshot of those full recommendations.

A housing strategy, using the findings of these surveys, is needed to establish a clear way forward for delivering new homes and housing options. This should include finding suitable locations for development. Empty properties that could be renovated or converted into affordable housing should also be identified. Consider the best route for delivery including community-led, local authority, Registered Social Landlord, CHT or the private sector.

Local development trusts, such as Gairloch and Loch Ewe Action Forum, can act as a vehicle for delivering community owned homes for the area. Explore the options for partnership working with key stakeholders such as local businesses, the local authority, local landowners, or housing associations. This can broaden the scope of any future project and has the potential to provide further project viability, expertise, funding streams and support. This should include complimenting existing programmes, such as the Highland council Affordable Housing Supply Programme.

Identify potential sites and or properties in each of the surveyed areas for phased future development. Taking into consideration demand from the surveys, tenure preferences and budgets it would be recommended to provide up to 12 homes in Gairloch, 4 homes in Poolewe and 2 in Aultbea, with potential for further development in a later phase should there still be a local need. The preferences and budgets provided by respondents indicate that a combination of low-cost home ownership and low-cost rental 2- and 3-bedroom homes would be the most appropriate mix for all three areas.

Explore complementary uses for sites which would sit alongside new housing such as seasonal accommodation, office accommodation, community shop or private housing. These can reduce risk, open up additional funding options and provide benefits to the community.

An important focus of the work is to identify opportunities to retain and attract people, exploring the provision of a range of suitable housing tenure models, including social housing, community-owned housing for rent, and discounted housing to buy, self-build plots and work at home options. A broad range of housing tenures will ultimately help to encourage more collaborative partnership working and inward investment opportunities. This in turn will help to support the existing local economies, services, infrastructure and businesses to be more sustainable, thereby enhancing the opportunities for growth in the Gairloch area.

